

January 25, 2011

HB223: An act creating a residential property tax circuit breaker...

Introduced by: D Barrett

I consider myself a pretty intelligent person, but the further I read in this bill, the more confused I became, and the more I questioned the necessity to make property taxes such a confusing and convoluted tangle.

The last property re-evaluation in the State spawned a lot of taxpayer anger, a lot of irate phone calls to legislators, State, and local agencies, and a host of reform bills in this session.

Understandably, legislators are scrambling to find property tax relief for their constituents. Rather than fixing the underlying problem, which is higher and higher property taxes every year, various attempts are trying to Band-Aid a system together that lowers or exempts all or portions of the taxes for this group or that group.

As I learned in my career as a software developer, when you start adding one fix after another to a program, it's a good indication that the design is flawed and an overhaul is needed. As you fix one thing, you break something else and you end up with a vicious circle of modifications.

What is needed is a real fix that provides real relief for everyone, at all levels of income, not this spaghetti approach.

Where is the fiscal note for this? This bill would require more resources from the Department of Revenue staff and County treasurers, would provide a 'shifting sands' effect on county budgets from year to year, and more effort on the part of taxpayers. As a taxpayer, I want things as simple and equitable as possible, and don't want to spend much time thinking about deadlines, paperwork, applications, etc.

As the saying goes, we need to K-I-S-S (keep it simple) the property tax process, not make it more complicated. I urge the committee to vote no on this bill.

Thank you,

Cindy Swank

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